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Cuba: Guesswork in Graustark

The involvement of the United States in the thwarted invasion of Cuba was about as complete as it could have been without the actual employment of U.S. troops and armament.

It is known that many meetings were held among high officials in Washington. Many experienced people attended these meetings, including military authorities. Our intelligence agency had evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the Castro regime. Those involved in these meetings and evaluations thought the project worth carrying on.

Its subsequent failure was apparent to all the world.

Now, because there are some lessons to be learned, as President Kennedy has said, a committee to investigate the aborted invasion has been appointed by the President. It includes General Maxwell D. Taylor, former chief of staff for the Army; Admiral Arleigh Burke, chief of naval operations; Robert F. Kennedy, attorney general, and Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

As Mr. Drummond notes on this page today, the results of that investigation may well suggest that the United States must find new means of coping with Communist subversion, or takeovers such as occurred in Cuba.

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But if there are meaningful lessons to be learned from the embarrassment that met the counter-revolutionaries on the swampy shores of Cuba last week, then the investigation by the Taylor group must necessarily be an investigation of our Central Intelligence Agency.

For if, as is known, experienced military and state department people thought the planned invasion of Cuba ought to go forward, they could have decided to give the go-ahead signal only on the belief that the enterprise would be successful.

Before such a signal could have been given, many things had to be evaluated. Among them were the strengths and weaknesses of the Castro forces, the mood and temper of the Cuban people, and the strengths and weaknesses of the invaders. Only until these matters had been soundly

weighed could a sound judgment on the success of the venture be determined.

It is known—now—that the invaders went in with not nearly enough strength to carry out the enterprise. It is known—now—that the Castro forces were exceedingly strong. It is known—now—that the Cuban people did not rise against their oppressors and in defense of the counter-revolutionaries.

Were these matters known before? Were they properly evaluated?

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Obviously, there were miscalculations of the gravest order in this entire enterprise. Among them, according to the *New York Times*, was the Central Intelligence Agency decision to hold incommunicado the leaders of the Cuban Revolutionary Council the day the landings took place. The explanation by our officials was that this was done as a "security measure." The effect, the *Times* reported, "was to keep them (the revolutionary leaders) from having any role in directing the landings and from coordinating the effort with the underground in Cuba."

Thus, it is apparent that the shadowy role of the Central Intelligence Agency pervaded this whole amateurish performance from beginning to end — from an erroneous assessment of the power of the Castro forces and of the mood of the Cuban people, and a mistaken evaluation of the strength necessary to make the invasion a success, down to the virtual imprisonment of the very leaders chosen to lead the uprisings.

Yet we find Mr. Dulles named to a group that will now have to assess the role of Mr. Dulles's agency. It is not exactly like putting the cow in charge of the cabbage patch. But it is close enough to that to be disturbing.

Mr. Dulles, we believe, ought to remove himself completely from this probe.

And the subsequent probe ought to go over the Central Intelligence Agency from top to bottom. We need much more reality and much less guesswork in Graustark if America is not to be further humiliated and embarrassed by cloak-and-dagger ventures that go awry.